

LEGACY, LEVERAGE AND COMMUNITY SPORT Birmingham2022 – A triumph of hope over evidence?

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The literature on mega-events and their diverse legacies has indicated strong beliefs of the inherent value to sport development in local communities. There has also been growth in the leverage approach to social benefits, for example, hosting teams from other nations, even beyond the hosting city, to spread this impact. Despite a limited support of evidence that investment in the mechanism of mega event hosting has on boosting sport participation and activity levels after Glasgow 2014, the apparent enthusiasm for event hosting remains strong in the UK at least. The apparent mismatch between expectations and reality did not deter Birmingham, supported by the DCMS, from bidding to host the re-allocated 2022 CWG- with Birmingham eventually, after protracted scrutiny, being awarded the event in 2017. Considering the impacts on community sport there are clear question regarding sport organisations and structures for sustainable sport in Austerity climates, as has been considered in previous PSA conferences. Thus, this paper focuses on the learning about legacy and leverage from pre-Olympic training camps and legacy-based research in 2012 and CWG in 2014. This will highlight some potential issues for Birmingham 2022 planners, who will attempt to do what Manchester, Glasgow and London could not – demonstrate a sustainable sport legacy in local populations and diverse communities. This paper thus considers policy-decision making in sport, particularly at the city/region level, as being more about place-making, hope and aspiration than about evidence and sport. Additional work needs to investigate through primary sources the extent to which Birmingham's bid was informed by learning from Manchester and Glasgow's efforts.

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